

Salmonid Coalition
Agriculture Subcommittee
Meeting Notes
Thursday, October 12, 2006
Draft Document

Item 1: Introductions

Al Cadd, Al Nelson, Bill Cox, Bill Hearn, Carolyn Wasem, John Nagle, Marc Kelley, Nick Frey, and Pete Dayton,

Item 2: Update on Reclaimed Water Use

The urban subcommittee was formed to address the issues around the water delivery system, i.e. Dry Creek. Identification of conservation measures and habitat enhancement and restoration are crucial to completing the Water Agency, NOAA Fisheries, and the Army Corps' Section 7 consultation. Use of reclaimed water in the Dry Creek may be identified as a water conservation measure. The Water Agency would like to distribute some of the reclaimed water to the agriculture community in Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys. The jurisdictions have an interest in using the reclaimed water in urban settings.

The projects that hold the most promise and interest to the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) would demonstrate potable water savings.

Item 3. Setbacks

The Coalition needs to explore whether information from the watershed analysis will assist in developing recommendations for setbacks. NOAA would like to devote 4 to 6 weeks in an effort to better understand the condition of the tributaries by accumulating the existing data and information. Given that timeline, the Coalition should begin a serious dialogue about setbacks in January of 2007.

The composition of the team that works on setbacks, people from varying interests and perspectives need to be included. Several concerns were voiced:

- 1) Too many individuals with varying perspectives will complicate the process.
- 2) Is there a bank slope formula that could be appropriately applied to the entire landscape?
- 3) Would the formula arrived at contemplate ministerial permits?
- 4) Does a CEQA compliance issue arise?
- 5) The team needs to emphasis that setback recommendations are for future, not existing activities.

Members expressed that they did not think a zero buffer was appropriate, but a 100-foot buffer could be equally inappropriate. The "Setback Team" should include individuals who can provide rational and reasoned input based on biology.

A document produced by the Bay Regional Board that addresses appropriate setbacks may be worth reviewing. The Bay Regional Board has established best management practices as well. Whether or not the setbacks or practices in this document are appropriate to this region needs to be explored.

The Setback Team will need to look at the relationship between best management practices (BMPs) to recommended setbacks. The Setback Team needs to work in concert with North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB) as they are looking at region-wide setbacks and best management practices. Bob Klampert from the NCRWQCB staff will participate as a member of the Setback Team.

In addition, the Setback Team needs to be expanded to include other representatives from other segments of the community. Another valuable addition to the Setback Team will be Kathy Hayes.

The environmental community has some concerns about the Coalition's process relative to setbacks. They include:

- a) Concerns regarding impermeable surfaces
- b) Grandfather clause for existing property
- c) Exploring alternatives to litigation

Item 4. Setbacks and Fish Bearing Streams

The value of evaluating setbacks on fish bearing streams may have some merit. Some subcommittee members stated that a "one size, fits all" would be problematic. One concept currently available is the approach to setbacks taken in the Sonoma County Water Agency Flood Control Manual (Manual). The Manual uses a formula for setbacks that is measured from the toe of the bank:

$$(2.5 \times (\text{depth of bank})) + 30 \text{ Ft.} = \text{Setback}$$

Other team members pointed out that this was designed to address setbacks relative to buildings. In this case, BMPs and Ag recommendations will play a large role in determining recommendations for setbacks. Varying standards may be appropriate and including information as to the type of stream and planned upland activity.

For the grape growing community, the 25-foot buffer is working well. This provides a starting point for discussions. VESCO is a good starting place as well.

Item 5. Final Product

At the end of this process, NOAA Fisheries anticipates that the Coalition will produce a document that makes recommendations and demonstrates our collective ability to protect and enhance salmon populations and their habitat that some decisions as to how to authorize incidental take can be made.

NOAA committed to the September 2005 Federal Register Notice as the date for its establishment of baseline conditions relative to the Salmon Coalition efforts.

Whatever regulatory action is taken, a baseline has to be established. What we are assessing is whether or not the proposed actions have an adverse affect. If the Coalition is proposing good things for the fish, the baseline is not an impediment.

Negative affects of new development have the potential to be offset and/or improved by the use of BMPs. The Coalition needs to create standards where development, agriculture or otherwise, can occur in an environmentally friendly manner.

Item 6. Ground Truthing

Once the analysis is complete the ground-truthing will need to take place in order to maximize our opportunities with landowners. Associations such as The Farm Bureau, the Sonoma County Grape Growers, United Wine Growers, Russian River Property Owners Association and the Dry Creek Valley Agriculture Water Users will assist in securing willing landowners participation.

Item 7. Federal Funds

The Coalition is looking for ways to secure federal funding. We will be meeting in DC with CEQ, Interior, OMB, and Congressional Staff to discuss potential sources for conservation funds.

Item 8. Next Meeting

November 14th 1:00 pm